

A
Post-Script
To the late
LETTER
OF THE
RECONCILEABILITY
OF
God's Prescience, &c.

By *John Howe*, the Author
of that Letter.

Imprimatur,

Aug. 3. 1677. Guil. Sill.

L O N D O N :

Printed for *Brabazon Aylmer*, at the
three Pigeons, over against the
Royal Exchange in *Cornhil*. 1677.

1774: 5-

A
POSTSCRIPT
 TO
 The late Letter of the
 Reconcileableness of God's Prescience, &c.

Finding that this Discourse of the Reconcileableness of God's Prescience of the sins of Men, with the wisdom and sanctity of his Counsels, Exhortations, &c. hath been mis-understood and mis-represented; I think it requisite to say somewhat briefly in reference thereto.

I wrote it upon the motion of that honourable Gentleman to whom it is inscribed ; who apprehended somewhat of that kind might be of use to render our Religion less-exceptionable to some persons of an *enquiring disposition*, that might perhaps be too sceptical and pendulous, if not prejudic't.

Having finisht it, I thought it best the Author's Name should pass under some disguise, supposing it might, so, better serve its end. For knowing my Name could not give the cause an advantage, I was not willing it should be in a possibility of making it incur any disadvantage. And therefore, as I have observed some, in such cases, to make use only of the *two last Letters*, I imitated some other, in the choice of

of the penultimate. But perceiving that Discourse now to fall under Animadversion, I reckon it becoming to be no longer concealed.

It was unavoidable to me, if I would, upon reasonable terms, apply my self to the consideration of the matter I had undertaken, of shewing the consistency of God's *Prescience of the sins of men*, with the *Preventive methods* we find him to have used against them, to express somewhat of my sense of (what I well knew to have been asserted by divers Schoolmen) God's *Predeterminative Concurrence to the sins of men* also.

For it had been (any one may see) very idle, and ludicrous trifling, to offer at reconciling those methods with *God's Prescience*,

ence, and have waved that (manifestly) greater difficulty of reconciling them with his *Predeterminative concourse*, if I had thought there had been such a thing. And were a like case, as if a Chirurgeon, undertaking a wounded person, should apply himself, with a great deal of diligence and address, to the cure of a Finger slightly scratch't ; and totally neglect a wound (feared to be mortal) in his Breast.

And whereas I reckon'd *God's Prescience* of all whatsoever futurities, and, consequently, of the sins of men, *most certain*, and demonstrable (tho it was not the business of this Discourse to demonstrate it, but, supposing it, to shew its reconcileableness with what it seemed not so well to agree) if I had believed his *Pre-*

Predeterminative concurrence to the sins of men to be *as certain* ; Perfect despair of being able to say any thing to purpose *in this case*, had made me resolve to say nothing *in either*.

For, to shew how it might stand with the *Wisdom* and *Sincerity* of the Bleſſed God, to counſel men not to ſin, to profess his hatred and deteſtation of it, to remonſtrare to men the great danger they ſhould incur by it; with ſo great appearance of ſeriousneſs to exhort, warn, expoſtulate with them concerning it, express his great diſpleaſure and grief for their ſinning, and conſequent miſeries; and yet all the while act them on thereto, by a ſecret, but mighty and irrefiſtible influence, ſeem'd to me an utterly *hopeleſs* and *impoſſible* un-

dertaking. The other, without this (supposing, *as to this*, the case to have been as some have thought it) a very *vain one*.

But being well assured, that what seem'd the greater difficulty, and to carry most of terrour and affright in the face of it, was only a *Chimera*. I reckoned the other very superable, and therefore directed my Discourse thither, according to the first design of it, which was in effect but to justifie God's making such a creature as Man, and governing him agreeably to his Nature.

Now judging it requisite, that he who should read that Discourse concerning *this designed Subject*, with any advantage, should have the same thoughts of the other, which was waved, that I had ; I apprehended it necessary

fary to communicate those thoughts concerning *that*, as I did. Not operously, and as my business, but only on the By, and as was fit in reference to a thing that was to be waved, and not insisted on.

Now I perceive that some persons, who had formerly entertained that strange opinion of *God's Predeterminative concurrence to the wickedest actions*, and not purged their minds of it, have been offended with *that Letter*, for not expressing more respect unto it. And yet offered nothing, themselves (which to me seems exceeding strange) for the solving of that great difficulty and encumbrance, which it infers upon our Religion.

Nor do I much wonder, that this opinion of *Predeterminative con-*

concourse, to sinful actions, should have some stiff adherents among our selves. For having been entertained by certain *Dominicans*, that were apprehended, in some things to approach nearer us, than others of the *Roman Church*; it came to receive favour and countenance from some of our own, of considerable note for piety and learning, whose Name and Authority cannot but be expected to have much influence, on the minds of many.

But I somewhat wonder, that they who have had no *kindness* for this *Letter*, upon the account of its dissent from them, in this particular, should not allow it *common justice*. For because it hath not said every thing they would have had it say, and that would have been grateful to them-

themselves, they impute to it the having said what it said not, and what they apprehended would be most ungrateful to all pious and sober men.

The sum is, they give out concerning it, that it denies the Providence of God about sin, which all good men ought to abhor from; and insinuate that it falls in with the sentiments of *Durandus*, which they know many think not well of.

All that I intend to do, for the present, upon this occasion, shall be to shew wherein the *Letter* is mis-represented, and charged with what it hath not in it. To remark what is said against that *supposed sense of it*, and give the *true sense of what it says* touching this matter; with a further account of the *Author's mind* here-

herein, than it was thought fit to insert into so transient and occasional a Discourse as that part of the *Letter* was. Whereby it may be seen, wherein he agrees with those of that opposite persuasion, and what the very *point* of difference is. Further than this, I yet intend not to go, till I see further need.

There have two Discourses come to my view that have referred to that *Letter*. The one in Manuscript only ; which, because it is uncertain to me, whether the reputed Author of it will own it or no ; and, because it says little or nothing, by way of argument, against the *true sense* of the *Letter*, I shall take no further present notice of. The other is Printed, and offers at somewhat of *argument*, which there-

therefore I shall more attentively consider.

It doth *this Letter* an honour, whereof its Author never had the least ambition or expectation, to insert the mention of it into the close of a very learned, elaborate Work †; with which † ^{comes} it might, yet, easily be imagined, ^{of the} Gentiles, ^{part 2.} its simplicity, and remoteness, ^{page 522.} from any pretence to learning, would so ill agree, that a quarrel could not but ensue. It is from one, who having spent a great part of his time in travelling thorough some Regions of *literature*, and been peaceable, as far as I have understood, in his Travels; it might have been hoped would have let this Pamphlet alone, when, for what I can observe, he finds no fault with it but what he makes; and is fain to accuse it

it of what is no where to be found in it, lest it should be innocent.

It is an unaccountable pleasure which men of some humours take, in depraving what is done by others, when there is nothing attempted that doth interfere with them ; nothing that can, righteously , be understood to cross any good end, which they more openly pretend to , nor the more concealed end (if they have any such) of their own glory.

Common edification seems less designed, when every thing must be thrown down , which is not built by their own hands, or by their own line and measure.

I plead nothing of merit in this little Essay, only I say for it,

it, that I know not what it can be guilty of towards this *learned man*, that can have occasioned this assault upon it by his Pen. By how much the less it keeps his road, the more I might have thought it out of the way of his notice. I am sure it meant him no harm, nor had any design to pilfer from him any part of his Collections.

But he says, *he may not let it pass*. Then there is no remedy. But I wonder what he should mean by *he may not*. It must either mean, that *he thought it unlawful* to let it pass, or that *he had a mighty strong and irresistible inclination* to squabble a little with it. The *former* cannot be imagined. For then, for the same reason, he would have attempted sundry others of former and later

later days, that have said much to the purpose, which *this Letter* doth but touch *obiter*, and on the By ; in its way to another design. But those were Giants, whom it was not so safe to meddle with. Therefore he could very wisely *let them paſs*, tho they have wounded his beloved Cause, beyond all that it is in the power of his, (or any) Art to Cure.

Whence it is consequent, that the whole businesſ must be resolved *into the latter*. And this inclination cannot but owe it ſelf to ſome peculiar aspect and reference he had to the Author. Whom, tho he was *in incognito*, yet (as I have been informed) he professes to have diſcourſt with upon the ſame Subject many times. And ſo, therefore, he might

might once more before this public rancounter, if he had thought fit, and Nature could have been repel'd a while.

It is true, he hath found me not facile to entertain his Sentiments in this matter. And indeed I have deeply dreaded the portentous imaginations which I found had more lightly tinctur'd his Mind, as to this thing, concerning the Blessed God. Than which, upon deliberation, I do believe, no human Wit can ever devise worse. As I have often freely told diuers of my Friends, and 'tis very likely among them, himself. Tho I do not suspect the contagion to have infected his vitals ; By a priviledg, vouchsaf't to some, that they may possibly drink some deadly thing that shall not hurt them.

B

But

But why must an impatency of this diffent break out into so vindictive an hostility? I will not say I expected more friendly dealing.

For, as I do well know it was very possible such a public contest might have been manag'd with that candour and fairnes, as not at all to intrench upon friendship. So, as it is, I need not own so much weaknes, as upon many years experience, not to be able to distinguish, and understand there are some tempers les capable of the ingenuities that belong to that pleasant relation.

But it was only a charitable errour of which I repent not, that I expected a more righteous dealing.

He pretends to give my sense, in other words, And then gravely

ly falls to combating his own
man of straw which he will have
represent me, and so I am to be
tortured in *Effigie*.

[*It can never be proved, that it
implies a contradiction, for God to
make a Creature, which should be
capable of acting without immediate
Concourse.*]

This he puts in a different char-
acter, as if I had said so much.

And why might not my own
words be allowed to speak my
own sense ? But that his under-
standing and eyes, must then have
conspired to tell him, that the
sense would have been quite an-
other ? It is only a [*predetermi-
native*] concurrence to all actions,
even those that are most malignantly
wicked, p. 32. And again, Gods
concurring, by a [*determinative*] in-
fluence unto wicked actions, p. 36.

Which is the only thing I speak of ; as what I cannot reconcile with the *Wisdom* and *Sinceritie*, of his Counsels and Exhortations, against such actions.

And if he had designed to serve any common good end, in this undertaking of his, why did he not attempt to reconcile them himself ? But the *Wisdom* and *Sinceritie* of God are thought fit, (as it would seem) to be sacrificed to the reputation of his more peculiarly admired Schoolmen. If there be such an universal determination, by an irresistible Divine influence, to all even the wickedest actions (which God forbid !) methinks such a difficulty should not be so easily past over. And surely the reconciling such a determinative influence with the *Divine Wisdom* and *Sinceritie*, had

had been a performance worth all his learned labours besides, and of greater service to the Christian name and honour.

But it seems the denying *concurrence* by such *predetermining influence*, is the denying of *all immediate concurrence*. And I am sent to the *Thomists*, *Scotists*, *Jesuites*, and *Suarez*, more especially to be taught otherwise. As if all these were for *determinative concourse*. Which is very pleasant, When the very *Heads* of the two first-mentioned *Sects* were against it, as we shall see further anon, the third *generally*, and *Suarez* particularly, whom he names, have so industriously and strongly opposed it. Yea and because I am sent not to the *Doctrine of predeterminative concourse*, I am represented (which was the last spite

spite that was to be done me) as a favourer of the *Hypothesis* of *Durandus*. And he might, as truly, have said of *Henry Nicholas*, but not so prudently, because he knowes whose opinions have a nearer alliance to that Family.

Now I heartily wish I had a ground for so much charity towards him, as to suppose him ignorant that *immediate concourse*, and *determinative*, are not wont to be used by the *Schoolmen*, in this *controversie*, as terms of the same signification. If he do, *himself*, think them to be all one, what warrant is that to him to give the *same* for *my sense*? When 'tis so well known they are not *commonly* so taken, and that *determinative concourse* is so voluminously written against, where *immediate* is expressly asserted. Let him

him but soberly tell me, what his design was, to dash out the word [*determining*] from what he recites Of that *Letter*, and put in [*immediate*]. Which he knowes is not to be found in any of the places he refers to in it. Or what was the spring of that confidence that made him intimate the *Scotists*, *Thomists*, The *Jesuites*, and particularly *Suarez*, to be against what is said in the *Letter*, in this thing? If he could procure all the Books in the World to be burnt, besides those in his own Library, he would yet have an hard task to make it be believed in the next Age, that all these were for God's efficacious determination of the *Wills of men unto wicked actions*.

I need not, after all this, concern my self, as to what he saies

about the *No Medium* between the extremes of his disjunctive proposition. *Either the human will must depend upon the Divine independent Will of God, &c.* (as he phrases it in the excess of his caution, lest any should think the *Will of God* was not a *Divine Will*) *Or God must depend on the human will, &c.* Unless he can shew that the human will cannot be said to depend on the Divine, *as being enabled by it*, except it be also *determined and impelled by it*, to every wicked action. 'A created Being that was entirely from God, with all the powers and faculties which belong to it; That hath its continual subsistence in him, and all those powers continued, and maintained by his influence every moment; That hath those powers made habile, and apt for what-

whatsoever its most natural motions and operations, by a suitable influence, whensoever it moves or operates. Can this creature be said *not to depend*, as to all its *motions and operations*, unless it be also unavoidably *impelled* to do every thing to which it is thus sufficiently *enabled*?

I again say, Was it impossible to God to make such a creature that can, in this case, *act or not act*? It is here odly enough said, that the Author gives no demonstration hereof. Of what? Why that it can never be proved (as the reference to the foregoing word shewes) that it implies a contradiction, &c. It seems it was expected that Authour should have proved by demonstration, that it can never be proved, that it implies a contradiction, for God to make a Creature,

ture, which should be capable of acting (as he feigns him to have said) without immediate concourse. By what rule of reasoning was he obliged to do so? But if the proving there is such a creature, as, in the case before expressed, can act without determinative concourse, will serve turn to prove, that it cannot be proved, it implies a contradiction there should be such a One: I may think the thing was done. And may think it sufficiently proved, that there is such a creature; If it appear (whereof there is too much proof) that there are such actions done by creatures, as, for the reasons that were before alledged, it could not stand with the Nature of God to determine them unto.

And was nothing said tending
to

to prove this, that it could not consist with the Nature of God, to determine men unto all the wicked actions they commit? It seems unles it were put into mood and figure, 'tis no proof. Nor was it the design of those Papers to *insist* upon that subject; but there are things suggested *in transitu*, as such a discourse could admit, that (whether they are demonstrative or no) would puzzle a considering person. *That God should have as much influence, and concurrence to the worst actions, as to the best. As much, or more than the sinner or the tempter.* *That the matter of his Lawes to Adam, and his posterity, should be a natural impossibilitie.* And I now add, the *irreconcileablenes of that determination, with God's Wisdom and Sinceritie, &c.* These I shall reckon

reckon demonstrations, till I see them well answered.

However if mine were a bad opinion, why was it not as confutable without the mention of *Durandus*? But that was, with him, an odious name; and fit, therefore, to impress the brand, which he desired I should wear for his sake. This is a likely way to clear the truth. Yet if it serve not one design, it will another, he thinks, upon which he was more intent.

Are all for *Durandus*'s way that are against a *predeterminative influence* to wicked actions? I could tell him who have shewn more strength in arguing against *Durandus*, than I find in all his Arguments; who yet have written, too, against *determinative concourse to such actions*, more than ever

ever he will be able to answer, or any man.

The truth is, when I wrote that *Letter*, I had never seen *Durandus*. Nor indeed did I consult any Book for the writing of it, (as I had not opportunity, if I had been so inclined) except, upon some occasions, the Bible. Not apprehending it necessary, to number votes, and consider how many mens thoughts were one way, and of how many the other, before I would adventure to think any of my own: But, I have this day, upon the view of his *Animadversions*, taken a view of *Durandus* too. And, really, cannot yet guess, what should tempt him to parallel my conceptions with *Durandus*'s, but that he took *his*, for somewhat an

L. 2. D. 2. 1. an ill-favoured name. *Durandus*, flatly, in several places denies God's *immediate concourse* to the actions of the Creatures. Which I never said nor thought. But do really believe his *immediate concourse*, to all actions of his Creatures (both *immediatione virtutis*, and *suppositi*, that I may more comply with his Scho'lastic humour, in the use of such terms, than gratifie my own) Yet not determinative unto wicked actions.

Again, *Durandus* denies *immediate concourse*, universally, and upon such a ground, as whereupon, the denial must equally extend to good actions as to bad; viz. That 'tis impossible the same numerical action should be from two or more Agents immediately and perfectly, except the same numerical virtue

D. 2. 1.
 Q. 5. 1.
 Ans.

virtue should be in each. But (he saies) the same numerical virtue cannot be in God and in the Creature, &c. Whereas he well knowes the concourse or influence (for I here affect not the curiositie to distinguish these two termes, as some do) which I deny not to be immediate to any actions, I only deny to be determinative, as to those which are wicked.

Yea and the Authours he qotes (§. 11.) *Aqinas* and *Scotus*, tho every body may know they are against what was the notion of *Durandus*, yet are as much against himself, if he will directly oppose that Letter, and assert determinative concourse to wicked actions. They held immediate concourse, not determinative. The former, tho he supposes Divine help in reference to the elections of the human will,

will, yet asserts the elections themselves to be in mans own power, and only saies that in the executions of those elections men can be hindered. That (whatsoever influence he asserts of the first cause)
 14.Q.83. men still, *habent se indifferenter ad bene vel male eligendum.* The other, tho he also excludes not the immediate efficiency of God in reference to the actions of men, yet is so far from making it determinative, that the reason he gives why, in evil actions, man sins, and God doth not, is, that the former of these Causes, *posset re-
 titudinem dare actui quam tenetur eam dare, tamen, quantum est ex se, daret, si voluntas creata cooperaretur*; in the very place which himself refers to. Wherein they differ from this Authour toto Cælo; and from me, in that they make not

nor determinative influence necessary in reference to good actions, which I expressly do.

Thus far it may be seen what pretence or colour he had to make *my Opinion* the same with *Durandus's*, or, his own, the same with that of *Thomas* and *Scotus*.

But if he knew in what esteem I have *the Schoolmen*, he would hardly believe me likely to step one foot out of my way, either to gain the reputation of any of their names, or avoid the disreputa-

tion. He, notwithstanding, supposed his own reputation to be so good (and I know no reason why he might not suppose so) as to make it be believed I was any thing he pleased to call me, by such as had not opportunity to be otherwise informed.

C

And

And thus I would take leave of him, And permit him to use his own reflections upon his usage of me, at his own leisure. But that civility bids me (since he is pleased to be at the pains of catechising me) first to give some answer to the Questions wherein he thus expostulates with me.

Q. 1.

Q. 1. Whether there be any action of Man on earth so good, which bath not some mixture of Sin in it? And if God concur to the substrate matter of it as good, must he not necessarily concur to the substrate matter as sinful? For is not the substrate matter of the act, both as good and sinful the same?

A. 1.

A. 1. It seems then, that God doth concur to the matter of an action as sinful. Which is honestly acknowledged, since by his Principles, it cannot be denied; tho

tho most, of his way, mince the busines, and say the concurrence is only to the action *which is sinful*, not *as sinful*.

2. This I am to consider as an argument for God's *predeterminative concurrence* to wicked actions. And thus it must be conceived. That if God concur by *determinative influence* to the imperfectly good actions of *Faith, Repentance, Love to himself, Prayer*: Therefore to the acts of enmity against himself, *Cursing, Idolatry, Blasphemy, &c.* And is it not a mighty consequence? If to actions that are good *qoad substantiam*, therefore to such as are in the *substance* of them evil? We our selves can, in a remoter kind, concur to the actions of others: Because you may afford, *your self, your leading concurrence* to actions imperfectly

C 2 good,

good, therefore may you to them that are down-right evil ? because to Praier, therefore to *Cursing* and *Swearing* ? and then ruin men for the actions you induc't them to ? You'l say God may rather, but sure he can much less do so than you. How could you be serious in the Proposal of this question ?

We are at a loss how it should consist with the Divine Wisdom, Justice, Goodnes, and Truth to design the punishing Man, yet innocent, with everlasting torments, for actions which God, himself, would irresistibly move him to ; Whereas his making a Covenant with *Adam* in reference to himself and his posterity, implied there was a possibility it might be kept ; at least that he would not make the keeping of it,

it, by his own positive influence, impossible. And you say, *If he might concur to the substrate matter of an action as good, (which tends to man's Salvation and Blessedness) he must necessarily concur (and that by an irresistible determinative influence, else you say nothing to me) to the substrate matter of all their evil actions, as evil, which tend to their ruine and misery, brought upon them by the actions which God makes them do,* I suppose S. Luk. 6. 9. with Hos. 13. 9. shew a difference. If you therefore ask me, Why I should not admit this consequence? I say it needs no other answer, than that I take Wisdom, Righteousnes, Goodnes, and Truth, to belong more to the *Idea* of God, than their contraries.

Q. 2.

*Q. 2. Is there any action so sin-
ful that hath not some natural good
as the substrate matter thereof?*

Ans^w.

*A. True. And what shall be
infer'd? That therefore God
must by a determinative influence
produce every such action what-
soever reason there be against it?
You might better argue thence
the necessity of his producing,
every hour, a new World; in
which there would be a great
deal more of positive Entity, and
natural goodness. Certainly the na-
tural goodness that is in the Enti-
ty of an action, is no such invi-
tation to the Holy God by deter-
minative influence to produce it,
as that he should offer violence
to his own Nature, and stain the
Justice and Honour of his Go-
vernment, by making it be done,
and*

and then punish it being done.

Q. 3. Do we not cut off the ^{Q. 3.} most illustrious part of Divine Providence in governing the lower World, &c.

A. What? by denying that *Ans* is the stated way of God's Government, to urge Men, irresistibly, to all that wickedness, for which he will afterwards punish them with everlasting torments? I should least of all, ever have expected such a question to this purpose, and am ashamed further to answer it. Only name any act of Providence, I hereby deny, if you can.

In the next place, That my sense may appear, in my own words; And that I may shew how far I am of the same mind

C 4 with

with those that apprehend me at so vast a distance from them ; and where, if they go further, our *parting point* must be ; I shall set down the particulars of my agreement with them, and do it in no other heads than they might have collected, if they had pleased, out of that *Letter*,
As

1. That God exerciseth an universal Providence about all his Creatures, both in sustaining and governing them.
2. That, more particularly, he exerciseth such a Providence about Man.
3. That this Providence about Man extends to all the actions of all men.
4. That it consists not alone in beholding the actions of men,

as

as if he were a meer spectatour of them only, but is positively active about them.

5. That this active Providence of God about all the actions of men consists not meerly in giving them the natural powers, whereby they can work *of themselves*, but in a real influence upon those powers.

6. That this influence is in reference to holy and spiritual actions (whereto since the Apostacie, the nature of Man is become viciously dis-inclined) necessary to be *efficaciously determinative*; such as shall overcome that dis-inclination, and reduce those powers into act.

7. That

7. That the *Ordinary*, appointed way for the communication of this *determinative influence*, is by our intervening consideration of the inducements which God represents to us in his Word, *viz.* the Precepts, Promises, and Combinations, which are the moral instruments of his Government. No doubt but he may (as is intimated in *the Letter*, p. 141.) extraordinarily act Men, in some rarer cases, by inward impulse, without the help of such external means, (as he did Prophets or inspired persons) And when he hath done so, we were not to think he treated them unagreeably to their natures, Or so as their natures could not, without violence, admit. But it hath been the care and designation of the

the Divine Wisdom, so to order the way of dispensation towards the several sorts of Creatures, as not only not, ordinarily, to impose upon them, what they could not conveniently be *patient* of, but so as that their powers and faculties might be put upon the *exercises* whereof they were capable, and to provide that neither their *passive* capacity should be overcharged, nor their *active* be unemployed.

And whereas the reasonable nature of Man renders him not only susceptible of unexpected *internal impressions*, but also capable of being Governed by *Laws*, which requires the use of his own endeavour to understand & obey them; And whereas we also find such Lawes are *actually made* for him,
and

and propounded to him with their proper enforcements. If it should be the fixed course of God's Government over him, only to guide him by inward impulses, This (as is said, *p. 142*) would render those Lawes and their Sanctions impertinencies, His faculties whereby he is capable of Moral Government *so far*, and *to this purpose*, useleſs and vain. And would be an occaſion, which the depraved Nature of Men, would be very apt to abuse into a temptation to them, never to bend their powers to the endeavour of doing any thing that were of an holy and spiritual tendency (from which their aversion would be alwaies prompting them to devise excuſes) more than a meer machine would

would apply it self to the uses
which it was made for, and doth
not understand.

Therefore, lest any should be so
unreasonable, as to expect God
should only surprize them, while
they resolvedly sit still and sleep;
he hath, in his infinite Wisdom,
withheld from them the occasion
hereof; And left them destitute
of any encouragement (whatso-
ever his extraordinary dealings
may have been with some) to
expect his influences, in the neg-
lect of his *Ordinary Methods*, as is
discoursed p. 90. and at large in
the following Pages. And which
is the plain sense of that admoni-
tion, *Phil. 2. 12, 13.* Yea and
tho there be never so many in-
stances of merciful surprisals, pre-
ventive

ventive of all our own consideration and care, Yet those are still to be accounted the *Ordinary Methods* which are so *de jure*, which would *actually* be so, if Men did their duty, and which God hath obliged us to observe and attend unto *as such*.

8. That in reference to all other actions which are not sinful, tho there be not a sinful disinclination to them, yet because there may be a sluggishnes, and ineptitude to some purposes God intends to serve by them, This influence is also alwaies *determinative* thereunto; whensoever to the immense Wisdom of God shall seem meet, and conduced to his own great and holy ends.

9. That,

9. That, in reference to *sinful actions*; by this influence God doth not only sustain men who do them, and continue to them their natural faculties and powers, whereby they are done, but also, *as the first Mover*, so far excite and actuate those powers, as that they are apt and habile for any congenerous action, to which they have a natural designation; and whereto they are not sinfully dis-inclined.

10. That, if men do then employ them to the doing of any sinful action; by that same influence, he doth, as to him seems meet, limit, moderate, and, against the inclination and design of the sinful Agent, over-rule and dispose it to good.

But

But now, if, besides all this, they will also assert ; That *God doth, by an efficacious influence, move and determine men to wicked actions.* This is that which I most resolvedly deny.

That is, in this I shall differ with them, that I do not suppose God to have, by internal influence, as far, an hand, in the worst and wickedest actions, as in the best.

I assert more to be necessary to actions, to which men are wickedly dis-inclin'd; but that less will suffice for their doing of actions, to which they have inclination more than enough. I reckon it sufficient to the production of this latter sort of actions, that their powers be actually

ally habile, and apt for any such action, in the general, as is con-natural to them; supposing there be not a peccant averfion, as there is to all those actions that are Holy and Spiritual; which averfion a more potent (*even a determinative*) influence is necessary to overcome. I explain my self by instance.

A man hath from God the powers belonging to his nature, by which he is capable of loving or hating an apprehended good or evil. These powers, being, by a present Divine influence, rendered habile, and apt for action: He can now love a good name, health, ease, life, and hate disgrace, sickness, pain, death. But he doth also by these powers thus habilitated for action,

D love

love wickednes, and hate God. I say, now, that *to those former acts* God should over and besides determine him, is not absolutely and alwaies necessary; and, *to the latter*, is impossible. But that, to hate wickednes *universally, and as such*, and to love God, the depravednes of his nature, by the Apostacie, hath made the *determinative influence* of efficacious grace necessary. Which, therefore, he hath indispensable obligation (nor is destitute of encouragement) earnestly to implore and pray for.

My meaning is now plain to such as have a mind to understand it.

Having thus given an account wherein

wherein I agree with them, And wherein, if they please, I must differ. It may perhaps be expected I should add further Reasons of that difference on my part. But I shall for the present forbear to do it.

I know it may be alledged, that some very Pious (as well as Learned) Men have been of their opinion. And I seriously believe it. But that signifies nothing to the goodnes of the opinion. Nor doth the badnes of it extinguish my *Charity*, nor reverence towards the men. For I consider, that as many hold the most important truths, and which most directly tend to impress the Image of God upon their Soules, that yet are never stamped with any such impression thereby; so,

it is not impossible some may have held very dangerous opinions, with a notional judgment, the pernicious influence whereof hath never distilled upon their hearts.

Neither shall I be willing without necessity to detect other mens infirmities. Yet if I find my self any way obliged further to intermeddle in this matter, I reckon the time I have to spend in this World, can never be spent to better purpose, than in discovering the fearful consequences of that rejected opinion, the vanity of the subterfuges whereby its assertours think to hide the malignity of it ; and the inefficacie of the Arguments brought for it.

Especially those two which the *Letter* takes notice of.

For

For as so ill-coloured an opinion ought never to be admitted without the most apparent necessity, So do I think it most apparent there is no necessity it should be admitted upon those grounds or any other. And doubt not but that both the Governing Providence of God in reference to all events whatsoever ; and his most certain foreknowledg of them all, may be defended, against all opposers, without it.

But I had rather my preparations to these purposes, should be buried in dust and silence ; than I should ever see the occasion which should carry the signification with it of their being at all needful.

And I shall take it for a just and most deplorable occasion, if

I shall find any to assert against me the contradictory to this Proposition,

That God doth not by an Efficacious Influence Universally move and determine men to all their Actions ; even those that are most wicked.

Which is the only *true*, and *plain* meaning, of what was said, about this busines, in the before mentioned *Letter*.

FINIS.

